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ABSTRACT

This presentation gives a general overview of the part-time student within the realm of the non-traditional student; provides a description of the Part-time Student Grant Program at Iowa State University; shares the results of a survey given to grant recipients; and provides recommendations for other institutions interested in similar innovative programs. Recommendations include ways to assess program need and goals; define funding requirements and locate sources for funds; and handle administrative responsibilities. (Author)

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IS THERE A "NEED" FOR FINANCIAL AID FOR THE PART-TIME STUDENT?

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As more discussion in higher education centers around the increase in the non-traditional adult student enrollment, new programs currently being developed should be designed to meet the needs of this new segment of the student population. The intent of this article is to present an innovative way to serve these adult students, who often return to college on a part-time basis.

National Enrollment Trends and Institutional Perspectives on the Non-traditional Student

For the past decade, there has been a great deal of writing about the non-traditional and part-time student. Edmund Gleazer, in a speech before the NASPA convention in 1977, said:

> "36% of the American population between the ages of 16 and 65 is in a career transition status . . . Adults in transition want career services of all types. However, they are most interested in information services, particularly specific information on jobs, careers, or educational opportunities."[5]

Gleazer stated that most of these people in transition realize they may need new skills and credentials for jobs, and so are headed back to school to get the necessary experiences.[5]

Projections indicate that the numbers of adult students have been and still are increasing. In 1974 an American Council on Education report stated that there were 9.9 million students enrolled in postsecondary education and one-third of these students were adults over the age of 25. In addition, older students made up two-thirds of all part-time students.[6] The American College Testing Program projects that by the year 1980 there will be 11 million adult students seeking bachelor's degrees.[4] Another prediction found in a study by Bowen indicates that by the year 2000 there will be 20 million adult students.[2]

After looking at the various trends and predictions indicating more adults pursuing higher education, the next step is to consider these trends and pre-

dictions from an institutional perspective. David Mathews, President of the University of Alabama and former Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, stated that:

> "Education flourishes, but more now outside formal institutions of learning. For example, there are twice as many adult learners in this country as there are college students of all levels and all types. They are going to school somewhere, but usually not on your campus or mine."[8]

The challenge to the field of higher education is to find out the nature of the institution the adult student attends and the services offered at that institution which would enable these adults to have optimum learning environments.

The Part-Time Student: An Enigma

Several studies have been conducted concerning the needs of adult students, with many of these showing that financial aid is a paramount concern. The American Council on Education found that adult students range economically from the most advantaged to the most disadvantaged. Often, an adult student's family income cannot support tuition costs, even on a part-time basis.[1] Another section of the same study conducted by ACE described three common myths about the part-time adult student. The first myth was that the part-time student is not serious enough to command the attention and resources of postsecondary education. The second myth was that the part-time student is working and can afford to pay his or her own way to college. The third myth was that in any case, resources are not sufficient to cover the added costs of financial aid for part-time students. ACE was able to document the seriousness of part-time students and their limited family income.[1]

Sims and Andrews also dispelled these myths in a study of part-time students participating in an adult scholarship program at Kellogg Community College in Michigan. They found that 88% of the participants completed their courses;

that 75% said they would not have enrolled without financial assistance; and that financial resources for an aid program for part-time adult students could be obtained.[9]

Regarding the female portion of the adult and part-time student population, Carol Eliason of the Center for Women's Opportunities in Washington, D.C. points out that the services needed for mature women are different in approach from those for veterans and young students. She also stresses that different models of financial aid are needed. Aid designated for part-time students is one model that could be developed to meet these needs.[5]

Iowa's Concern for Part-Time Students

At the state level, an awareness of the needs of part-time adult students is increasing. In an address given to the Iowa Association of Student Personnel Administrators in 1977, Willard Boyd, President of the University of Iowa, stressed that attention should be given to this segment of the student population. He stated that:

> "Last year, more than 60% of all postsecondary students were enrolled on a part-time basis. More than one-third of these were 25 years of age or older, compared with 22% in 1970."[3]

Boyd also made reference to a study completed in 1977 entitled Lifelong Learning in the Third Century. This study describes:

> ". . . the financial plight of many part-time students is a serious one because of severly limited access to financial assistance. Most postsecondary institutions give priority to the needs of the full-time student in allocating scholarships, grants, loans and jobs. All federal programs of student aid are restricted to students enrolled at least half-time . . . In addition, current methods of assessing student financial needs are geared to serve the young traditional student. Therefore, the student returning to school in mid-life cannot expect to receive financial aid unless he or she is enrolled at least half-time and has extremely limited income and assets."[7]

Sources of financing non-traditional education ought to include: 1) student fees, 2) internal re-allocation of existing funds within the institution, both

for educational programs and financial aid, 3) private foundation grants, 4) employer support of students, 5) federal government funds, both for financial aid to students and categorical aid to institutions and, 6) state government funds.[7]

Several of the recommendations published as a result of the study of lifelong learning in Iowa relate directly to part-time student financial aid. Recommendation #28 states that institutions should consider reallocating existing funds to meet the needs of a changing population and, when possible, pool their resources to plan, implement and support cooperative efforts to seek federal and/or private foundation grants.[7]

Recommendation #29 states that financial assistance should be made more accessible to the non-traditional student by the following measures:

a. some institutionally controlled financial assistance should be allocated to needy part-time students, including those enrolled in noncredit programs;
b. state tuition grants and scholarships should be offered to the needy part-time student proportionally to the course load when sufficient funds are made available to accomplish this and not at the expense of the traditional student financial aid program;
c. the uniform need analysis methodology now designated to assess the financial need of the dependent or newly emancipated student should be altered for a more equitable need assessment of the older, non-traditional student;
d. innovative alternative plans for student assistance, including assistance for students enrolled in noncredit courses, should be studied and tested on a limited pilot basis;
e. part-time and full-time campus employment opportunities should be as available to part-time students as they are for full-time students;
f. a study should be made of ways in which business and industry can be encouraged to contribute through tax credit incentives to special tuition aid programs for their employees; both credit and noncredit.[7]

This overview of the non-traditional and part-time student presented heretofore has given the groundwork for a discussion of the establishment of a Part-Time Student Grant program at Iowa State University.

A History of the Part-Time Student Grant Program at Iowa State University

Iowa State University has begun in recent years to experience an increase in the number of students enrolling part-time, with many of these students coming from the adult student segment. Over the past five years, the number of part-time undergraduate students has increased from 600 in 1972 to 1,305 in 1977 (an increase of 118%). Part-time graduate student enrollment has shown an increase from 808 in 1972 to 1,221 in 1977 (an increase of 51%). When these students began to make inquiries to the Financial Aid Office for funding, they found that funds are typically not available to aid part-time students. Traditional financial aid programs have been limited by federal law to eligible students who attend on at least a half-time basis. Many of these part-time students have families or jobs and cannot afford the money or time to return to school on a half-time or full-time basis. One of the first priorities for a student in this situation is to acquire sufficient funds to continue his or her education.

Iowa State University has attempted to respond to this need by creating the Part-Time Student Grant program. The program was brought into existence by funding from the Alumni Achievement Funds, the fund-raising branch of the University. The Fund contributed $5,000.00 initially and added another $300.00 later in the year. The intent was to create a pilot project for the 1976-77 academic year, with the hope of continuing it if successful. The grant money was administered by representatives from the Financial Aid Office, Student Counseling Service, and Married Student Housing Office. These representatives formed an ad hoc committee which reported to the Coordinator of Financial Aid. The committee also developed public relations materials and made the program visible through newspapers, radio, campus newsletters, and other outreach services on

and off campus.

Criteria for Selection of Part-Time Student Grants

Criteria for awarding the grants were developed by the ad hoc committee. The criteria included United States citizenship or permanent residency, the extent of previous education, relative financial need, the person's educational goals, and at least part-time enrollment, defined as 6 hours or less per quarter. Applications were accepted throughout the year although all funds were committed in early fall. The committee felt that eligible students with the least amount of postsecondary education should be the first priority. In addition, since the money was gathered from donors primarily within the state of Iowa, Iowa residents were given priority over non-residents and international students.

Characteristics of Grant Recipients and Fund Analysis

Using the criteria described, the funds were awarded. A breakdown of the persons awarded a grant out of this applicant pool is available in Appendix I. To summarize, the typical recipient of a grant was a female, living in Married Student Housing, an Iowa resident, 26 years old, married with no children, and 2 to 4 years of previous college course work. The average recipient met the general definition set by many institutions for being an adult student - that is, 25 years of age or older.

The final pool of applicants who received funds are represented by quarter in Table I, as follows:

Table I -

Amount Expended	# Awarded	Quarter Awarded
$1,558.00	19	Fall 1976
$1,501.75	18	Winter 1977
$1,501.00	17	Spring 1977
$ 627.00	11	Summer 1977
$5,187.75	65	

While the total number of grants awarded throughout the year is 65, this figure is a duplicated number and doesn't accurately represent the number of students receiving grants. Actually 40 students were awarded throughout the year. The average grant was $130, which allowed each student to take an average of 7 credits per year.

The Effect of the Part-Time Student Grant on the Recipients

At the end of the school year, a questionnaire was sent to each recipient of a Part-Time Student Grant to help evaluate the successes and weaknesses of the pilot project. Of the 40 people receiving aid, 22 returned the questionnaire, resulting in a 55% return rate. One of the most striking results was that 82% of the recipients planned to continue their enrollment at Iowa State University for the 1977-78 academic year. Many of these were advancing to full-time enrollment throughout the year. The Part-Time Student Grant program enabled 86% of the recipients to attend classes which they would not otherwise have been able to afford. This supports the finding by ACE that adult students do need financial help in many cases. Even including those who could possibly have attended without the grant, 73% said the grant gave them the added incentive needed to return to postsecondary education. Of the 14% who did not complete their course(s), some of the reasons listed for discontinuing their studies were pregnancy, moving from Iowa State, and the financial pressure to return to work full-time. All were legitimate reasons and none represented a lack of motivation or interest in coursework or the program per se.

Regarding personal growth, 73% of the recipients felt they had experienced an attitude change due to taking college courses. Most of them mentioned that they had more self-confidence, greater feelings of self-worth, and more optimism toward the future. The majority of the people (64%) had not changed their own career goals as a result of returning to college. However, many took courses

related to their own fields of interest and saw these courses as furthering their opportunity to advance.

The comments and suggestions brought out in the survey seemed to indicate several successful points of the program and positive feelings from all recipients. All respondents felt the Part-Time Student Grant program was valuable and should be continued. Suggestions listed to improve the program included using more publicity, having more funds available for summer sessions, and providing an opportunity for the recipients to meet each other and share their experiences.

Recommendations for Program Development and Implementation at Other Institutions

There are many questions one has to ask when considering a financial program for part-time students, and there are many directions the program can take. These recommendations for program development and implementation in the institutional setting have been derived from a common sense, experiential approach. The following questions and recommendations could be used as food for thought in developing and implementing a financial aid program for part-time students.

1. Does the institution need a financial program for part-time students?

   Perhaps the nature of the student body does not lend itself to developing such a program. The way to find out if a program is needed is to research the enrollment and identify patterns related to non-traditional and part-time enrollment. One should examine present enrollment patterns and project them over the next five or ten years. This data should be compared with national predictive norms related to enrollment. The registrar and admissions director can be extremely helpful in gathering this data. Probably the percentage increase of part-time students in recent years

will show surprising increases.

Once the enrollment data is collected, it has to be determined if a financial program is what the part-time student needs at the institution. The counseling staff, residence department staff, admissions staff, and financial aid staff are most likely to come into contact with those part-time students seeking financial assistance. These people can be helpful in targeting this population's needs, and, if desired, can furnish names of the part-time students for direct contact in order to discuss college and university services.

At Iowa State University, the first two steps were followed. It was found that the number of part-time students was increasing drastically and that one of their concerns was related to finances.

2. What group(s) are to be assisted and what has to be taken into consideration in establishing program goals?

Program goals may be defined by relating back to the needs of the part-time students attending the institution. The program may be focused on a given group such as women attending part-time, spouses of full-time students attending part-time, part-time students over 25 years of age, minority students attending part-time, part-time students who have been out of school for a specified time period, or any combination of the above. Of course, the option is open to combine several groups or to include all groups. In addition, the focus of criteria might be on financial need, residency, and/or citizenship. In defining program goals another issue to be addressed is whether the program will take the form of grants, scholarships, and/or loans.

3. What are the funding requirements based upon the defined group's financial "need"?

Funding sources which currently exist should be investigated. Perhaps

funding for part-time students already exists in a segment of the college or university. If this is the case, it is a simple matter of educating the population about the funding source. This probably won't be the case, however, since traditional financial aid sources are limited to those attending at least half-time.

There are two important aspects of establishing a funding level. One is to determine the number of students who would potentially be assisted by such a program. Secondly, one must determine the level of financial support. The number of students who could be assisted needs to be calculated and the extent to which these students are to be financially supported should be examined. Are they to be supported for a portion of their fees, all their fees, fees and books, a portion of their living expenses, all their living expenses, child care, etc.? Again a combination of these factors can be used. In order for a funding level to be derived, however, these questions must be answered.

4. Who will be given the responsibility for administering the program?

The financial aid office should probably be the administering agent, thereby keeping all student financial aid centralized. The person(s) responsible for presenting the proposal could potentially respresent several areas including extension, continuing education, married housing, counseling and financial aid. It is advisable, however, to have an office and person charged with the major administrative responsibility. The dean, vice president, and possibly president should also know of the plans for they may lend valuable support to your proposed program. On the other hand, if they do not support the proposal, it probably should be reexamined.

5. What are the potential funding sources for the program?

Several funding possibilities can be explored. One aspect which has

to be considered is whether or not to request funds from budgeted sources (hard money). In using budgeted funds the program may be continued year after year. Generally it is more difficult to obtain a committment from budgeted sources due to other demands already placed upon those funds. One must convince those who control the budgeted source that the program should be a priority. However, if a committment is made from budgeted sources, which are usually thought of as being already established within the college or university community, it is probably best to develop the program along those lines. One should be aware that the other demands for budgeted funds have been around longer than the proposed program. To change the direction of those funds from an established program to a newly developed one is difficult.

A second funding possibility within the college or university community to explore is requesting financial support for a pilot project from a college or university funding source. Funding for the program would be requested from a pool of money which has not been budgeted (soft money). The request is usually made to the fund-raising branch of the college or university. If they do not have non-budgeted funds on hand, perhaps they can assist in a capital campaign or at least in talking with donors who might be interested in the project. The difficult aspect of administering a program on totally "soft" funds is that each year the request has to be justified and considered. It is more likely that the funding source could change priorities and decide not to fund the program for the next year. An advantage of getting the initial funds from a non-budgeted source for the first year is that it gives a year to test out a pilot program to see if the demand for it is as great as has been perceived. If the funding for the first year is through "soft" money, attention should be directed toward eventually

getting the funding for the program changed from non-budgeted funds (soft money) to budgeted funds (hard money).

A third funding possibility is to approach business and industry in order to convince them that it would be advantageous from a public relations and/or tax standpoint to help in the funding of the program. Perhaps a group of businesses could fund the program.

A fourth funding possibility is to encourage civic group participation. Sometimes civic groups are looking for areas which need attention; perhaps they might be interested in providing funds individually or as a collection of civic groups for the project.

Any combination of the above can also be used. You might want to try a matching-fund approach with several of the above funding sources.

6. Assuming funding has been sought and obtained, then how is it awarded?

The awarding philosophy depends to a large extent upon the wishes of the funding agent. Once those criteria have been set, the amount of funds appropriated will have an impact upon the other awarding criteria. That is, if the donor wishes to sponsor a scholarship program with a given grade point average but allows only a minimal amount, then perhaps the award will be restricted to 50% of the amount of fees paid by those students who fall within the specified grade point average.

Other criteria used by the awarding agent should be consistent with the needs of the students as defined earlier in the program development process and should be limited to the defined group in need of the financial assistance.

7. Once an awarding philosophy has been determined, how is the program publicized and what other administrative challenges are there?

Various sources of media can be used in promoting the program. News-

papers, especially student newspapers, radio, television, flyers to student groups, college or university publications, and bulletin board displays can be used to make the program visible. In each method of publicizing the program, be sure to mention the nature of the program eligibility requirements, the amount of funds available, the maximum an individual can receive, the deadlines, and the application process. Students should also be told when they can expect to be notified about their eligibility.

After publicity for the program has been accomplished and applications have been gathered, the criteria already agreed upon should be implemented in the selection process. All applicants should be notified regardless of whether they have been selected for the program. A procedure should be established to award the money to students. Generally, two options are apparent. The funds can be administered prior to fee payment so the student has the funds to pay fees. The other option is to reimburse the student either directly after fee payment or at the end of the quarter. The first option has the advantage of giving the student the money prior to payment so fees are paid by the award; it has the disadvantage that if the student decides to withdraw, then refunds are involved and this complicates program administration. Reimbursing the student after the term has ended initially has the advantage of making sure that the student completes the term on a satisfactory level as defined by the person(s) responsible for program administration but has the disadvantage of placing the student in a difficult cash flow situation.

One aspect of the program administration that has to be dealt with is attrition. Part-time students, like other non-traditional students, tend to make up their minds about coursework later than traditional students. Thus, funds which were thought to be committed are often returned because

the part-time student has changed his or her mind about attending the next term. Consequently, it is necessary for the person(s) responsible for selecting recipients to periodically review and re-award the funds remaining due to attrition.

8. How is program effectiveness evaluated?

In order to insure accountability it is necessary to research the recipient pool to determine if the goals of the program have been accomplished. This is necessary for program refinement and, if necessary, redirection.

Evaluation also has the spin-off effect of providing good public relations with the donor and build a support base for future funding requests. It is beneficial to let the recipients know that their feedback may affect the future funding of the program. This usually guarantees a larger return rate of questionnaires mailed.

Feedback from the evaluation may help you address several key questions. Did your program provide the financial assistance needed to have a higher retention rate of part-time students? Did the funding of part-time students provide them the financial incentive needed to attempt postsecondary education? Would the recipients have attended without the financial assistance through the program? Did the program allow the part-time students to gain the necessary confidence to later change from part-time status to full-time status? Should the fund requests for the program be increased, maintained, or eliminated? Do part-time students eventually graduate from a course of study or are they experimenting with courses which may or may not lead to graduation?

9. What other ramifications does a program of this nature have?

The number of part-time students in institutions across the country is

increasing although financial assistance programs still tend to exclude them from consideration. It is felt that the part-time student should have the same services as the full-time student. The cost to educate the part-time student by credit unit is just as expensive as for the full-time student. Thus, one ramification of a financial aid program for part-time students is to make the part-time student more visible. With more visibility, and by demonstrating the needs of this growing segment of the student body, perhaps administrators and legislators will begin to think in terms of funding for institutions based upon the number of credits taken rather than the full-time equivalency ratio now in effect at most institutions.

Summary

This article has given an overview of the non-traditional student in general and the part-time student specifically. The Part-Time Student Grant program at Iowa State University has been described in terms of development and implementation, the results of a survey given to the recipient pool have been shared, and recommendations for beginning a financial aid program for part-time students have been offered. If this article has stimulated interest and provided incentive for the establishment of a financial program for the non-traditional and part-time student, then it has achieved the objectives of the authors. Only through efforts to develop non-traditional programs for non-traditional students will we be able to meet the needs of this new clientele in higher education.

APPENDIX I

ANALYSIS OF APPLICANTS AND RECIPIENTS

1976-77

		Awarded (46)	Not Awarded (47)
Sex			
	Female	43	33
	Male	3	14
Address			
	Ames	19	15
	Married Housing	22	31
	Other Communities	5	1
Residence			
	Iowa Resident	44	27
	Non-Resident	2	9
	International	0	11
Age			
	19	2	0
	20	3	1
	21	2	3
	22	5	4
	23	8	4
	24	6	6
	25	2	6
	26	3	3
	27	3	2
	28	2	3
	29	1	2
	30	2	3
	31	0	2
	32	1	1
	33	0	2
	34	2	0
	35	0	2
	36	2	1
	38	0	1
	39	1	1
	44	1	0
Marital Status			
	Married	34	38
	Divorced/Separated	4	2
	Single	8	7

	Awarded (46)	Not Awarded (47)
Number of Children		
0	20	29
1	10	8
2	10	8
3	3	2
4	2	0
7	1	0
Extent of Previous Education		
Less than 1 year of college	11	5
1 - 2	11	4
2 - 4	24	4
B.S. earned	0	16
B.S. +	0	12
M.S. earned	0	5
M.S. +	0	1

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